

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 12115Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8138

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 0248

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y R E F E R E N C E C

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PROR, DM, US

SUBJ: AF/W DIRECTOR'S MEETING WITH AMB BOYA

REF A - STATE 34123, B - COTONOU 235, C- STATE 13264

1. EMBASSY GRATIFIED TO LEARN THROUGH REFTEL THAT DEPT HAS COMMENCED DIALOGUE WITH BENIN'S NEW AMB TO UNITED STATES THOMAS BOYA. WE ALSO NOTE THAT REFTEL CONTAINS INFO THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN USEFUL FOR US TO HAVE KNOWN HERE DURING PAST MONTH. FOR EXAMPLE, WE DID NOT REALIZE SEC KISSINGER, REPLYING TO QUESTION AT HIS MEETING WITH AFRICAN AMBS ON JAN 15, SAID THERE WAS NO "LIST" OF COUNTRIES AGAINST WHOM SANCTIONS WERE BEING TAKEN DUE TO THEIR VOTES IN UNGA (DEPT'S ACCOUNT OF THAT MEETING, STATE 18879, MAKES NO REFERENCE TO QUESTION RE LIST).

FORNMIN ALLADAYE, AGITATED, ASKED ME JAN 16 ABOUT NEWS REPORTS THAT THERE WAS SUCH A LIST, AND I SAID I HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF ONE (COTONOU 81).

2. EMBASSY HAD NOTED CAREFULLY DEPT SPOKESMAN FUNSETH'S REMARKS TO PRESS ON JAN 9. NOT KNOWING WHETHER THERE WAS A LIST OF NOR, BUT SUSPECTING THAT THERE MIGHT BE, I DID NOT CHALLENGE CONFIDENTIAL

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ALLADAYE IN REGARD TO THE "LIST" WHEN I SAW HIM JAN 30, FEB

4 OR FEB 10. I DID INDICATE THAT BENIN WAS AMONG SEVERAL COUNTRIES WHOSE RECORDS VIS-A-VIS THE UNITED STATES IN INTERNATIONAL FORA WERE BEING EXAMINED. (THIS DESIGNED TO COUNTER BENIN GOVT THEME THAT USG IS SINGLING OUT POOR LITTLE BENIN FOR DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT.) IN VIEW BENIN GOVT'S EMOTIONAL CONCERNS RE AN ALLEGED LIST, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FAR BETTER HAD I BEEN ABLE TO AFFIRM OUTRIGHT THAT THERE WAS NO SUCH LIST.

3. BOYA'S REPORTING TO HIS GOVT VERY LIKELY GIVES IMPRESSION THAT SINCE BENIN EMBASSY IS SELDOM MADE AWARE OF ANY PROBLEMS CREATED BY BENIN GOVT, USG AMB IN COTONOU US ACTING ON HIS OWN, OUT OF STEP WITH USG. THAT MAY ACCOUNT FOR ALLADAYE'S BOLDNESS IN ATTACKING ME PERSONALY IN OUR CONVERSATION OF FEB 10 (REF B).

4. WE ALSO NOTE WITH CONCERN THAT IN TALK WITH BOYA, DEPT'S REP APPARENTLY DID NOT INDICATE USG DISSATISFACTION WITH ANY BENIN GOVT ACTIONS AGAINST UNITED STATES EXCEPT BENIN'S SLOWNESS IN INDEMNIFYING EXPROPRIATED AMERICAN INTERESTS. REFTEL ACCOUNT OF CONVERSATION GIVES IMPRESSION THAT OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS MUST BE IN RELATIVELY GOOD SHAPE, THOUGH "CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST THIS YEAR IN SEVERAL VOTES BEFORE THE UNGA...MIGHT EVENTUALLY SPARK SOME REVIEW OF US ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES WHICH CONSISTENTLY DIFFERED WITH US IN MAJOR ISSUES." WE QUESTION WHETHER THIS APPROACH IN WASHINGTON IS ADEQUATE TO THE NEEDS OF EMBATTLED SITUATION OUT HERE, CAUSED BY AGGRESSIVE BENINESE TACTICS VIS-A-VIS THIS EMBASSY. WE WOULD NOTE THAT WE HAVE ONLY BEEN ACTING DEFENSIVELY, PARRY-ING THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S ATTACKS.

5. AS OUR REPORTS HAVE SHOWN, WE HAVE BEEN OPERATING UNDER GUIDANCE PROVIDED IN REF C, WHICH ENTITLED "ORGANIZING FOR MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY." PARA 4 OF THAT MESSAGE SAYS: "TO ADD CREDIBILITY TO OUR DIPLOMATIC PERSUASION, POSTS SHOULD NOT SEEK TO DISPEL IMPRESSION THAT FUTURE HOSTILITY TO OUR KEY INTERESTS WILL NOT BE COST-FREE -- NOR INDEED WILL IT BE". WE HAVE ALSO ECHOED DEPT SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT OF JAN 9 THAT "OBVIOUSLY OUR ACTIONS TOWARD OTHER COUNTRIES ARE BASED ON THEIR ACTIONS TOWARD US."

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6. WE NOTE WITH ASTONISHMENT THAT FROM STATE 34136, RECEIVED THIS MORNING, THAT AID/W OFFICIALS INFORMED SANDERS AND THOMAS AND NELLO TEAR REPS FEB 6 OF DECISION TO ALLOW AMENDMENT NO 2 TO SANDERS AND THOMAS CONTRACT TO PROCEED. HAD WE BEEN ABLE TO CONVEY THAT GOOD NEWS TO FOREIGN MINISTER WHEN HE CONVOKED ME FOR FOURTH TIME ON FEB 10, I MIGHT WELL HAVE SUCCEEDED IN PERSUADING BENIN GOVT TO BE MORE PATIENT AND STOP RUSHING FORWARD TOWARD CONFRONTATION.

7. SUMMING UP, WE SUSPECT THAT NET EFFECT OF BLAND APPROACH TO BOYA WILL PROBABLY BE TO REINFORCE BENIN GOVT'S ASSESSMENT THAT THIS EMBASSY'S RESPONSES TO BENINESE PRESSURES AGAINST USG, AND ITS PROTESTS RE HOSTILE BENINESE ACTIONS, HAVE NO BACKING IN WASHINGTON. THEREFORE WHY SHOULD BENIN HAVE ANY MORE CONFIDENCE IN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR HERE?

8. WE ASSUME THAT REF B, WHICH REPORTED FOREIGN MINISTER ALLADAYE'S CRITICISM OF MY CONDUCT AS AMBASSADOR, WAS REPEATED TO USUN AND OTHER RECOMMENDED ADDRESSEES.
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